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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to achieve two objectives: (1) identify priority problems/concerns of Florida families as perceived by home economics supervisors and teachers; and (2) determine prevention and intervention strategies viewed as successful in addressing the identified social/family concerns. Thirty-two problems/concerns were identified and categorized as follows: economic support and welfare; family formation; family functioning and stress; and physical and mental health. A sample of 51 rural, suburban, and urban home economics teachers and supervisors ranked the frequency of the problems/concerns in their communities. Student performance standards were evaluated to determine which courses addressed, to some degree, the 10 most prevalent problems. Ten prevention/intervention strategies were identified that have had positive impacts on the identified problems. Fifty Florida home economics teachers of each of 11 home economics courses were surveyed; 319 of the 550 responded. The study found more similarities than differences in the rankings of problems for urban, suburban, and rural communities. Among the differences was that child care ranked first in the urban communities, fourth in the suburban communities, and ninth in the rural communities. Recommendations were made to encourage home economics teachers to plan inservice activities on the priority needs of families. The survey instrument is attached. (KC)

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Title: Selected Teaching/Learning Practices in Home Economics Curriculum Viewed As Successful in Addressing Social/Family Concerns

Objectives: This study was designed to be carried out in two phases. The objective of Phase I was to identify problems concerns of Florida families as perceived by Home Economics supervisors and teachers. The objectives of Phase II were to determine teaching/learning strategies that are used in Home Economics courses and are viewed as successful in addressing identified social/family concerns.

Methodology: Phase I - A list of problems/concerns affecting today's families was developed, then reviewed and analyzed by a panel of experts. Thirty two problems/concerns were identified and categorized under four main topics: economic support and welfare. Family formation; family functioning and stress; and physical and mental health. A sampler of rural, suburban and urban Home Economics Secondary teachers and supervisors responded to a ticket-type scale focusing on the frequency of the problems/concerns in their communities.

Phase II: Using Florida Curriculum frameworks for Home Economics courses, student performance standards were evaluated to determine which courses addressed, to some degree, the ten problems/concerns identified as most prevalent in Phase I. Ten prevention/intervention strategies were identified which have had positive impact on the identified problems. Fifty Florida Home Economics teachers of each of eleven Home Economics courses were randomly selected to respond to a Likert-type scale indicating the frequency of use of the prevention/intervention on strategies as it relates to one or more of the problems and perceived success rate of the strategy.

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This Study - Strengthening Family Life Through Home Economics Curricula: A Study Indentifying Problems of Families and Linkages with Prevention and Intervention Strategies - was funded under the Carl D Perkins Vocational Education Act.

The purposes of the study were (1) to identify priority problems/concerns of Florida families as perceived by Home Economics supervisors and teachers and (2) determine prevention and intervention teaching/learning strategies viewed as successful in addressing the identified social/family concerns.

The increasing number of families at risk throughout the nation is startling. Significantly, many of the societal problems impacting upon the family are not diminishing.

The Home Economics curriculum focuses on concerns of human development and multiple aspects of family life. Historically, Home Economists have the reputation of being "with it", meaning that as times and society have changed Home Economics programs have been redesigned to meet new challenges. Because of the multifaceted problems of families, new demands on Home Economics educators are formidable.

It was intended that the resulting data from this research would (1) provide an update on current family problems as perceived by professionals in urban, suburban, and rural communities; (2) provide data on the status of

teacher utilization of prevention and intervention strategies in the new Florida curriculum frameworks; and (3) provide information having implications for improvement and extension of current practices.

The study was designed to be carried out in two distinct phases. The purpose of Phase I was to identify problems and concerns of Florida families as perceived by Home Economics supervisors and teachers. The purpose of Phase II was to determine teaching/learning strategies that are used in Home Economics courses and are viewed as successful in addressing identified family concerns.

PHASE I - PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS OF TODAY'S FAMILIES

Development of the Instrument

Current literature was reviewed to develop a list of problems and concerns affecting today's families. The list of concerns was reviewed and analyzed by a panel of experts. Using the results of the analysis, 32 problems and concerns were identified and categorized under four main topics: economic support and welfare, family formation, family functioning and stress, and physical and mental health. Using a Likert-type scale, respondents were asked to indicate the intensity of the problem/concern in their own school-communities. Values for the scale were: five, consistently a problem; four, frequently a problem; three, sporadically a problem; two, rarely a problem and one, not a problem (Appendix A).

Selection of the Sample

The sample for this phase of the study was selected from a list of Home Economics teachers and supervisors who had worked cooperatively with the researchers on previous curriculum related projects. Seventeen respondents from urban, suburban, and rural communities were identified for a sample total of fifty-one. Each community group consisted of eleven high school teachers of Home Economics, four junior/middle school teachers of Home Economics, and two Home Economics county supervisors. Mean scores were determined for each of the items and the ten problems/concerns with the highest mean scores were selected to be used in Phase II. These were: Single Parent Families, Separation and Divorce, Stepfamilies, Child Care, Teenage Parents, Balancing Home & Work Roles, Families in Economic Stress, Problems of Self Esteem, Parenting, and Substance Abuse.

Mean Score and Rank of Identified Problems and Concerns of Florida Families

Problem/Concern	Mean Score	Rank
Single Parent Families	4.50	1
Separation and Divorce	4.48	2
Stepfamilies	4.38	3
Child Care	4.37	4
Teenage Parents	4.19	5
Balancing Home & Work Roles	4.17	6
Families in Economic Stress	4.12	7.5
Problems of Self Esteem	4.12	7.5
Parenting	4.10	9.5
Substance Abuse	4.10	9.5

PHASE II STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Development of the Instrument

Using current research on pedagogical methodology, ten prevention and intervention strategies were identified which have had positive impacts on the identified problems. These were:

Discussion/panel (etc.) for both parents and students

Student involvement in community campaigns directed at prevention and intervention measures

Resource persons from social/family agencies and religious institutions to interact with class on specific problems

Referral of families or individual students to appropriate social agencies

Field trips to appropriate sources of community support

Surveys of family and individual concerns with parents/students

Peer counseling in classes or FHA/HERO chapters to deal with individual and family concerns

Student/teacher contributions to school newspaper and other media productions

Role play/sociodrama/ case studies emphasizing solutions for problems

Video tapes of family problems to provide a forum for alternative solutions

Using the 1988-89 Florida curriculum frameworks for the Home Economics prevocational and consumer and homemaking courses, an evaluation was made of the student performance standards to determine which courses addressed, to some degree, the ten selected problems.

Each survey instrument identified the Home Economics course and problems being addressed (Appendix B). A matrix of the courses and the problems/concerns foci for each course was constructed. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of use of the prevention/intervention strategies (five, always use; four, frequently use; three, sometimes use; two, rarely use; and one, never use) and the perceived success rate of the strategy used (five, highly successful; four, successful; three, somewhat successful; two, not successful; and one, did not use).

Selection of the Sample

Using the list of Florida Home Economics Teachers for 1988-89, generated at the Department of Education, a random sample of 50 Home Economics teachers teaching each of the prevocational and consumer and homemaking courses was selected. The total sample included 550 teachers in the State of Florida.

Collection of Data

A copy of the data collection instrument with a letter of transmittal was sent to teachers identified for the sample. For each of the courses, the problems which could be addressed in that course were identified on the survey instrument.

From the sample of 550 Home Economics teachers, there were 319 usable returns, for a 58% response rate.

Number and Percentage of Responses to Phase II
By Problem/Concern

Problem/Concern	Sent	Returned	
	N	N	%
Single Parent Families	150	90	60.00
Separation and Divorce	150	88	58.67
Stepfamilies	100	63	63.00
Child Care	250	152	60.80
Teenage Parents	150	90	60.00
Balancing Home and Work Roles	150	90	60.00
Families in Economic Stress	450	252	56.00
Problems of Self Esteem	350	213	60.86
Parenting	100	64	64.00
Substance Abuse	300	182	60.67

A cross tabulation was completed on the frequency of the use of the prevention/intervention strategies (practices), and the success rate of the prevention/intervention strategies (practices) related to the courses and to the problem/concerns.

In reporting on the frequency of use of the prevention/intervention strategies, 50% or more of the respondents indicated that they always or frequently used role play/sociodrama/case studies emphasizing solutions for problems (52.1%) and video tapes of family problems to provide a forum for alternative solutions (58%).

The success rate of the prevention/intervention strategies (practices) was reported as highly successful and successful by 50% or more of the respondents for three of the prevention/intervention strategies (practices). The three were: resource persons from social/family agencies and religious institutions to interact with class on specific

problems (54.9%); role play/sociodrama/case studies emphasizing solutions for problems (56.8%); and video tapes of family problems to provide a forum for alternative solutions (57.4%).

In analyzing the success rate of the prevention/intervention strategies (practices) as related to family problems/concerns, three prevention/intervention strategies were identified by 50% or more of the respondents as being highly successful and successful for each of the ten problems/concerns. The three strategies were the same ones which were identified as highly successful and successful for the courses. The strategy "resource persons from social/family agencies and religious institutions to interact with class on specific problems" was reported as highly successful and successful in addressing all the problems/concerns by a range of 56.5% to 67.5% of the respondents. The percentage of respondents who rated as highly successful and successful the strategy "role play/sociodrama/case studies emphasizing solutions for problems" ranged from 60.3% to 89.6%. The percentage of respondents rating the strategy "videotapes of family problems to provide a forum for alternative solutions" ranged from 67.4% to 71.9%.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are more similarities than differences in the rankings of problems for each of the urban, suburban and rural communities. However, dramatic differences in ranking

some of the problems or concerns among the different types of communities can be seen. Child Care was ranked first in the urban communities and fourth in the suburban communities. In contrast, it was ranked ninth in the rural communities.

Teenage Parents, which was ranked second in the rural communities, was ranked ninth in suburban communities and tenth in urban communities.

It is significant that Substance Abuse was ranked 2.5 in urban communities but eleventh in both rural and suburban communities. Balancing Home and Work Roles was ranked second in suburban communities while it ranked sixth in urban communities and twelfth in rural communities.

The fifth ranked problem/concern in rural communities was Families in Economic Stress. This problem/concern ranked eighth in suburban communities and tenth in urban communities.

Recommendations Related to Problems and Concerns

1) Curriculum frameworks should be evaluated to determine the extent to which the identified problems and concerns are being addressed.
2) Home Economics educators should be encouraged to work with other community groups concerned with the family in surveying priority problems and needs.
3) Inservice activities should be planned which focus on the priority needs of families in rural, suburban, and urban communities.

There were three practices which were used most frequently and successfully in dealing with problems of families in the identified courses. They were: a) use of resource persons from social/family agencies and religious institutions to interact with classes on specific problems; b) use of role play/sociodrama/case studies emphasizing solutions for problems; and c) use of video tapes of family problems to provide a forum for alternative solutions. These are strategies or practices fundamentally dealing with prevention. However they can lay a foundation for readiness for intervention.

On the other hand, the practices that were used less frequently were: a) use of discussion/panel for both parents and students; b) student involvement in community campaigns directed at prevention and intervention measures; c) referral of families or individual students to appropriate social agencies; d) use of peer counseling in classes or FHA/HERO chapters to deal with individual and family concerns; and e) use of surveys to study status of family and individual concerns with parents and students. This may reflect the need for more experience and background in the utilization of these practices. These practices tend to encourage intervention in the solution of personal, family and community problems.

<u>Recommendations Related to Prevention/Intervention Strategies</u>

1) Both preservice and inservice education need more focus on the use of practices that facilitate

appropriate intervention in the solution of individual and family problems.

2) First hand experiences with organizations and agencies that facilitate solution of individual and family problems/concerns should be provided for Home Economics educators.

3) The preparation of Home Economics educators of adults needs to include greater use of both prevention and intervention strategies.

PHASE I INSTRUMENT

PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS OF TODAY'S FAMILIES

Directions: Listed below are problems and concerns which have been identified in current literature as characteristic of today's families. For each statement, circle the number which best describes a problem/concern evident in the communities you serve.

5 = consistently a problem
4 = frequently a problem
3 = sporadically a problem
2 = rarely a problem
1 = not a problem

Problem/Concern	Intensity of Problem/Concern
ECONOMIC SUPPORT & WELFARE	
1. Child Care	5 4 3 2 1
2. Families in Economic Stress	5 4 3 2 1
3. Family Mobility	5 4 3 2 1
4. Financial Counseling	5 4 3 2 1
5. Housing Problems	5 4 3 2 1
6. Incarceration of Family Members	5 4 3 2 1
FAMILY FORMATION	
7. Adoptive & Foster Families	5 4 3 2 1
8. Childlessness	5 4 3 2 1
9. Multigeneration Households	5 4 3 2 1
10. Older Family Members	5 4 3 2 1
11. Separation & Divorce	5 4 3 2 1
12. Single Parent Families	5 4 3 2 1
13. Stepfamilies	5 4 3 2 1
14. Teenage Parents	5 4 3 2 1
15. Two Career Families	5 4 3 2 1
16. Unwed Fathers	5 4 3 2 1
FAMILY FUNCTIONING & STRESS	
17. Balancing Home & Work Roles	5 4 3 2 1
18. Child Custody Issues	5 4 3 2 1
19. Gangs	5 4 3 2 1
20. Homosexuality	5 4 3 2 1
21. Parenting	5 4 3 2 1
22. Parent Teacher Relationships	5 4 3 2 1
23. Problems of Self Esteem	5 4 3 2 1
24. Sibling Interaction	5 4 3 2 1
25. Use of Community Agencies	5 4 3 2 1
PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH	
26. Cumpulsive Behavior	5 4 3 2 1
27. Dealing with Death	5 4 3 2 1
28. Family Members with Disabilities	5 4 3 2 1
29. Family Nutrition	5 4 3 2 1
30. Physical, Mental & Sexual Abuse	5 4 3 2 1
31. Substance Abuse	5 4 3 2 1
32. Suicide	5 4 3 2 1

PHASE II INSTRUMENT

STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING FAMILIES THROUGH HOME ECONOMICS PROGRAMS

In a recent survey of family problems and concerns, the following concerns were addressed directly or indirectly by the intended outcomes and/or student performance standards for the course

(5) HOME & FAMILY MANAGEMENT:

(12) Single Parent Families
(13) Separation & Divorce
(14) Stepfamilies
(15) Child Care
(16) Teenage Parents
(17) Balancing Home & Work Roles
(18) Families in Economic Stress
(19) Problems of Self Esteem
(20) Parenting
(21) Substance Abuse

Directions: For each of the practices listed below, circle the number in the LEFT HAND COLUMN that best describes how often you use that practice when teaching about one of the above family problems/ concerns. In the spaces provided, list additional practices you use when teaching about the problems/concerns and indicate how often you use each.

5 = always use; 4 = frequently use; 3 = sometimes use; 2 = rarely use; 1 = never use

Frequency of Use	Practices	Success Rate
5 4 3 2 1	Discussion/panel (etc.) for both parents and students	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Student involvement in community campaigns directed at prevention and intervention measures	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Resource persons from social/family agencies and religious institutions to interact with class on specific problems	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Referral of families or individual students to appropriate social agencies	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Field trips to appropriate sources of community support	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Surveys of family and individual concerns with parents/students	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Peer counseling in classes or FHA/HERO chapters to deal with individual and family concerns	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Student/teacher contributions to school newspaper and other media productions	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Role play/sociodrama/case studies emphasizing solutions for problems	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	Video tapes of family problems to provide a forum for alternative solutions	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	_____	5 4 3 2 1
	_____	
5 4 3 2 1	_____	5 4 3 2 1
	_____	

Directions: For each of the practices listed above, circle the number in the RIGHT HAND COLUMN that best describes how successful your use of the practice has been.

5 = highly successful; 4 = successful; 3 = somewhat successful; 2 = not successful; 1 = did not use

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